Some Thoughts about Prof. Jim Tour and his “Inside Story” about Origin of Life  
 Here's a link to videos of Prof. Tour's lectures at U. of Waterloo back in   
March...likely the OOL talk is the same content. Fabulous information!   
<https://uwaterloo.ca/pascal-lectures/>  
   
Prof. Jim Tour of Rice University spoke at our Houston Chapter meeting last Saturday. Check out “RTB Houston TX” on Facebook for more information about his presentation.  
   
Prof. Tour is a synthetic chemist and he discussed the chemical details of what is needed to happen for abiogenesis to occur. In his prepared talk, he avoided “philosophy” and any deeper theological implications. What is remarkable is that Jim gets down to the “building molecules” detail, showing what must be done chemically in order to get the molecular processes that go on in the cell. It quickly becomes clear that there is essentially zero understanding of abiogenesis. As Jim says, origin of life is still a complete mystery.  
   
In critiquing Origin of Life (OOL) proposals, Jim says things like, “this reaction occurs at 5 degree C and the next one at 50 C, how can that happen in some cave somewhere?” “You must have Just-In-Time delivery of the next reactant. How does that happen when it is in some cave 1000 miles away?” “You have to know where you are going. Nature has no idea of where to go to get life.” “If things don’t work as planned, the chemist can look at the written protocol, make changes and start over. Nature does not have a notebook, how can she make a small change and start over?” “Time is not your friend, it is your enemy. Products of reactions decay quickly.” “RNA is unstable; it has to be, otherwise you would end up with a cell filled with one kind of protein.” (This last remark is a dismissal of the RNA World approach to OOL.)  
   
Please note: The above is from what I remember and does not do justice to Prof. Tour’s presentation.  
   
Jim treats origin of life proposals like he would any proposal from a student to do synthetic chemistry. He would look at it and show why it would not work. There is no possible appeal to “natural selection” or “deep time.” Just like mathematical proofs, the chemistry is either right or wrong, there is no wiggle room. Lots of “hand waving” (yes, he used that phrase) will not overcome the chemical facts.  
   
Fuz and Hugh take a similar approach in their writing about OOL. The chemistry just does not work. What I find ironic is that while atheists have only materialistic solutions to OOL (meaning bare bones chemistry and natural selection), the deeper you go into the chemistry of OOL, the more impossible it becomes. In the case of origin of life, reductive materialism is self-defeating. The deeper you drill down, the less plausible materialism becomes. Even some atheists (for example, philosopher Thomas Nagel) have come to that conclusion.  
   
At the end of his presentation and during the Q&A time, Jim gave his personal story about accepting Jesus Christ and he also said some remarkable things about Hugh Ross and RTB. We will post the slides and audio on our Facebook page when they become available.  
   
Otis Graf  
Houston, TX

I especially liked this Veritas Forum on YouTube that James Tour delivered last year:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0uq727Fjbw>  
   
Blessings in Christ,

Otis - this is a great summary (as you know, I was there too). I spent  
some time talking with him (because I actually did some work for him as a  
3rd party) and he gave me his business card. He advertises his website, "  
[www.jmtour.com](http://www.jmtour.com/)" on the card, where he has extensive information on his work  
and beliefs. I think this is amazing considering his position at Rice. I  
did find his conversation about about the beliefs of other 'prominent'  
scientists interesting, especially how they convey/emphasize different  
things privately vs. publicly (as there are academic repercussions) -  
reminds me of similar comments I've heard about academics studying the  
paranormal.  
Brandon